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DOH-BAY PROMOTES EARLY DETECTION AND TREATMENT TO FIGHT BREAST CANCER

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Panama City, Fla. — In recognition of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, the Florida Department of Health in Bay County encourages all women to receive regular screenings to promote early detection and treatment of breast cancer. Important advances have been made through increased awareness, breast cancer screenings and better treatments.

"We encourage women to get an annual breast exam and mammogram because early detection is key when it comes to breast cancer," said Sandon S. Speedling, MHS, CPM, CPH, Administrator/Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in Bay County.

According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), not counting some kinds of skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the United States, no matter a person's race or ethnicity. The American Cancer Society estimates 20,920 new cases are expected in Florida this year alone. In 2020, 3,060 women in Florida died from Female Breast Cancer and in Bay County 19 women died from Female Breast Cancer.

Risk factors for breast cancer are being a woman, being older and having changes in BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes. Men can also get breast cancer and breast cancer affects younger women although most breast cancers are found in women who are 50 years old or older. There are things you can do to lower your breast cancer risk:

- Keep a healthy weight and exercise regularly.
- Don't drink alcohol or limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- If you are taking hormone replacement therapy or birth control pills, ask your doctor about the risks.
- Breastfeed your children, if possible.

The Florida Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (FCCEDP) provides access to the breast and cervical cancer screenings providers recommend. The screenings are free or low cost for those who meet the program eligibility requirements. To see if you qualify, contact Becky Dunaway at DOH-Jackson at 850-526-2412, ext. 179. The Florida Department of Health in Jackson County FCCEDP services the following counties: Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Walton and Washington. You may also contact your local Florida Department of Health.

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